



Interim Report on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances  
of the Urban District of Dawley for the year 1939.

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1939 opened with every expectation of a great advancement being made in the health services of the town. The sewerage system, a product of local planning, had outgrown its capacity and it was intended that it should be replaced by modern plant. A steady scheme of housing was gradually reducing the number of undesirable properties and the Dawley people were beginning to appreciate the benefits of the improved living conditions when the onset of hostilities stopped constructional advancement and further building. Immediately, emergency measures replaced peace-time health administration, and so it has remained. The Sanitary Staff has adjusted itself to the new requirements and has put forward great effort in keeping pace with the calls made on it. Such health services as can be maintained are given attention and it is hoped that with the return to normal conditions the work of reconstruction will be able to be resumed.

POPULATION. With plenty of work available in the Urban area and its surrounds there appears to be a steady increase in population. There has been no great movement of the temporary labouring class into the district and lodging accommodation has not been much in demand. At the beginning of September the town was asked to receive Evacuees from Smethwick district of Birmingham. These were mainly mothers with young children. The local residents found accommodation for the new-comers but they did not stay long. For one reason or another they gradually found their way back to their homes in the town. This immigration, of short duration, passed peacefully, there being a complete absence of complaint. The local people responded well to the calls made on them in making new homes for the evacuated.

LABORATORY FACILITIES. No calls have been made on the Emergency Health Laboratory which has been set up in Wellington.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES. These have been augmented through the local Air Raid Precaution Scheme.

WATER. This has been kept under close supervision during the year. With chlorination on a permanent basis tests have been made at regular intervals and these reveal that, generally, the residual chlorine is small in amount. When the Wenlock Borough Council from whom the supply is obtained, have fully established their extension scheme it is hoped that the quantity available will be more abundant so that Dawley Council may be able to control a more constant flow to consumers in neighbouring districts. This matter is also receiving attention at the hands of the receiving authorities so that they, in their turn, may be able to offer every facility to expedite passage. It is noticed from the returns that the average consumption gallons per head is less than that of 1938.

SEWAGE. Although the major scheme to establish a modern sewage system and disposal plant had been the subject of a Ministry of Health Inquiry the National Crisis has prevented the Scheme being furthered and construction has had to be abandoned. In using the existing disposal plant considerable supervision is required to adequately safeguard the district, and advantage is being taken of every dry spell to clear the lagoons and so make the most of the limited capacity of the installation.

HOUSING. Constructional work of schemes contemplated in the Halins Lee and Horsehay districts have had to be abandoned. There is a considerable dearth of houses in the area and the local inhabitants who have been unable to be provided for by the Council have been forced to take lodgings and in some instances this has been the position over a prolonged period.

MILK AND DAIRIES. Producers have maintained a good standard of cleanliness, there having been no complaints. As the farms are in most cases small little constructional work is outstanding or necessary.

MEAT. The local slaughterhouses are inspected regularly and there are few complaints. With the immediate intention to centralise killing and inspection no further work of this nature will take place in the district.

PREPARATION OF FOODS. It appears that little trade of this nature is carried on.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. Generally the district has been comparatively free from notifiable disease during the year. A few cases of Scarlet Fever occurred and there was one case of diphtheria. The falling incidence of the latter disease has been very noticeable since 1936. A steady average of applicants is being received for immunisation against diphtheria and the intensive campaign of 1936/37 is reflected in the comparative freedom of the town from the disease.

The new regulations governing the notification of Measles and Whooping Cough and making this compulsory came into force in the latter part of the year. At the end of 1939 a number of cases of Measles had been brought to notice but there was no approach to epidemic conditions. No cases of Whooping Cough occurred. Tuberculous patients are kept under close supervision and every effort is made to give satisfactory living accommodation to each.

(Signed) W. A. M. STEWART

Medical Officer of Health.

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